13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

578 674 worse was, to begin with, ever brought to my notice by my informants.

When, however, I delved more deeply into the matter, I soon found out that appearances were very deceptive, and that under a peaceful exterior, many serious acts of aggression had taken and were still taking place. Personal feuds of intense hatred and jealousy, especially among [754] the older men, seemed to be the reasons for what were not just empty accusations of witchcraft, but unmistakably crimes, and I gathered so much evidence of this that I have come to think that there are very few influential old Todas who die a natural death. They are more [682 648] usually done away with by their rivals, through the time-honoured method of having them poisoned by the Kurumbas, mainly, I think, with *datura*.

578 682 754 115 662 Thus Karnoz of Melgarsh (45), whom I got to know very well, was greatly feared as a *pili* (sorcerer). When I returned to the Nilgiris for the second time in 1949, I found that he had reputedly done away with Ujar (48), my old and trusted informant, his uncle and chief of the Melgarsh *modol*, simply because he wished to take his place at the head of the clan. He had had him poisoned by his "own" Kurumbas, as it was put to me, after having first got the deceased's wife and two children out of the way in the same manner. The remaining members of the murdered man's family had fled in terror to Kakhwurkh *mad* and their house stood empty and forlorn at Melgarsh when I came back there in 1949. Karnoz was fined Rs. 12 by the *noim* for this [683 623] crime and warned that, if he persisted in practising sorcery, his house would be set on fire, and he himself killed.

While working with the widow of Kuriolv (52), whom Rivers describes in such eloquent terms (see *The Todas*, pp. 551–2), my wife discovered that, after having rid himself of rivals and wives alike by the habitual [648] Toda method of indirect poisoning through the agency of the Kurumbas, he was himself murdered in the same way by his wife. He ended his life practically at the same time as his rival and victim Arjgur (56) who, in a neighbouring house at Kuur, died from the effects of the poison which he, Kuriolv, had himself administered to him.

During my second stay in the Nilgiris in 1949, Piliar (52) poisoned Tödhem of Aperngor because he had had a son by a woman whom Piliar had given up, believing her to be barren. The deed was com- [761 123 757] mitted by a Kurumba in Piliar's pay who gave the poison with some milk to Tödhem at a funeral which I attended. I later tried to get the ailing man to hospital in Ootacamund in order to look better into his case as well as to try to save him, but to no avail. I came up against